

ing estrangement from France In Scotland, and the fact of a formidable claimant to the English throne, who, besides being Queen of Scotland, is about to become Queen of France. Note, too, the bearing of these facts on the attitude of England and Scotland at this critical juncture. Both are menaced by a common danger on the side of France, and both are about to be drawn by this common menace into an alliance fraught with all the pregnant consequences of destiny. The historic moment had at last come for the unionist policy of Henry VII. and Henry VIII. There was, on both sides, on political grounds, the requisite motive of a common policy. There was, too, in the Protestant party in both countries, on religious grounds, an additional motive for common action. The working of this twofold motive largely explains the startling suddenness with which the Reformation in Scotland came at last. The Church might have on its side the Government and the French alliance, but at the supreme moment the Government and the French alliance were out of unison with the spirit of the nation, and the Church itself had, besides, forfeited the goodwill of the people. Add the fact that its wealth, so unworthily used, had stirred the cupidity of interested magnates, and Nemesis could not fail to be swift and sure.

The "organisation of the reform party dates from a visit paid by Knox to Scotland in the autumn of 1555. The visit lasted till the following July, and during these months he was unceasingly engaged in preaching and in conferring with the friends of reform. His sermons were nothing if not revolutionary, though for the present he contented himself with preaching in the houses of his noble patrons at Edinburgh, in the Mearns, Lothian, and Ayrshire. At a conference at the Edinburgh lodging of John Erskine, the accomplished laird of Dun, he condemned the conduct of those who still attended mass, "for avoiding of sclander," as idolatrous, and persuaded his friends to take a firmer stand against the old Church. Among those so persuaded were, besides Erskine, Lord Lorn, soon to become Earl of Argyll, Lord James Stewart, Prior of St Andrews and natural son of James V., and the Earls of Glencairn and Morton. His own circumspection in not venturing to attack publicly the old creed did not save him